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Until The Night Ends

Becky F.

Watch the tears fall from my eyes,
then please wipe them away,
hold me close and calm my fear
and stay with me until the night ends.
Tell me that you care for me
and make me cry again.
Whisper softly in my ear
only comforting words
and shelter me from the rest of the world
if only for a while.
Smile at me often
and try to make me laugh,
but don't ever leave me
until the pain is gone
and refuses to come back.
Then stay with me much longer,
until my life is through
because I hope that by that time
you'll grow to love me too.

Burning Nothing

Christopher Helton

I spend nights with matches and knives, bringing up blood and fire,
Leaning out of shattered windows, dropping matches to the lights below.
I am looking down into the eyes of the angry night streets
Wondering about all the whys and wheres of all the things
I have seen and done around my world, trying to forget about your face. .

I am cutting open my heart now, to see what can be found,
And I am burning up my soul, just to know if I can feel anymore.
Because now I've got nothing, nothing left to hold in these arms,
Nothing at all but the blood and fire I am dropping to the streets below.

I have spent a thousand useless nights, thinking of nothing but you,
Missing your arms and longing for your perfume, but knowing
That I would have to leave you behind, leaving my wounds
And hoping that I would learn what I should have already known.

When I believed in nothing, I called out your name:
You would come and take me and fill me up with faith again.
Taking me in your arms, you covered my head until the bad stuff broke.
You would dance your little dance, until you could make me smile.

You had a temper, like my jealousy, we were too hot and too greedy,
And in obsession, like our love, we could only feel everything.
Like Heathcliff and Cathy out on the moors, we had only ourselves to trust.
When I was with you, we melted into something larger and stronger;
Without you, you have taken the strength from us, and left me with the weakness.

Sometimes now, I feel I am a shadow, walking in your footsteps.
So I am left with these empty arms, burning myself with these flames,
Leaning out of blasted windows watching the world get away from me.
These matches are my tears dropping for the people below to catch,
And this blood coming from these cuts is my life for someone else to find.
I am hoping something I have lost will return from far away.

This blood and these flames that I am left with are still just
Too much for these restless arms of mine to hold on to anymore.
So now my nights of desire, and my days of passion, are calling again,
Calling me back to you, calling me to your arms, back to your fold.

How could you leave me when I needed to possess you?
When you dissappeared I was empty. I hated you. I loved you too.
My wants here are simple: all I want is all that you are.
I am not like I was when we knew each other in that time before,
But still after all this time and distance, you continue to affect me,
And so now I am calling out to you across all the time and space.
I am calling to you from 23,000 miles away from where we were.

You see, I am looking for someone who can take everything that
I am capable of giving, and still have the strength to give back
Everything, and as much as I am going to need to receive,
And still have the will to live, knowing nothing but my blood and fire.

I am intense and I am in need of someone else's strengths.
Sometimes, I feel forsaken, like all the things I have to give away.
I am an ancient heart, and I will always remember your eyes.

What Do You Tell A Friend?

Sheryl Fritz

What do you tell a friend
When he says that he's confused?
When he says his life's a wreck?
When his problems are so complex?

What do you tell a friend
When you know deep down he's right?
When you know he's tearing himself apart?
When he's also breaking your heart?

What do you tell a friend
When he wants your words to make sense?
When your explanations seem lame?
When you don't know how to explain?

What do you tell a friend
When you want to make it all right?
When he says he's tired of being alone?
When you wish you had the answers but don't?

Tell me, what do you tell a friend?

A Sob in the Night

Becky F.

A sob in the night hurts so much more
than many tears cried in a day.
A sob breaks the peaceful stillness
of the comforting blackness of night.
And sometimes the darkness stifles the cry
and welcomes it more than the day.
And sometimes our nightly cries are heard
And someone lends a helping hand.
Though the night hurts more than the day,
she always holds us in the crook of her arm
until the morning comes.

Broken Wings

Becky F.

How does one with broken wings
ever learn to fly?
And will those wings ever mend?
I've never wanted to fly
so much as I do now,
yet I cannot get into flight
because I don't know how.
You really make my spirit soar
and I wish my heart could, too.
I know that if you helped me
we could, together, touch the sky.
Help me mend my broken wings,
teach me how to fly!

Seguro

Kathy Cavanaugh

Seguro's jaw tensed and his coal eyes flared with fire as he surveyed the land in front of him. His deeply bronzed skin was aware of any slight change in temperature and wind as he watched from on top of Emerald Hill over the dense forest below him. A ribbon of his long raven hair tickled his straight nose and he impatiently brushed it behind his shoulder. A loose, long, white cotton shirt covered most of his upper body and was drawn in at his waist by the medicine bag full of stones, scrolls, and other magical objects. Tan, tight leggings curved around and accentuated the strong muscles in his thighs and met the top of his knee-high soft leather boots. As he adjusted his position, his long, thin fingers tightened around the smooth wooden staff he was holding. The staff was a deep purple color with a clear sphere set in the top with long, white feathers hanging from leather straps attached to the top. Seguro shifted his gaze to the staff for a brief instant and felt pride well up inside of him again as he thought of how he earned the right to carry such a treasure and at such a young age of twenty. As he waited, he repeatedly flexed and relaxed all of his muscles to make sure he would be ready when he received the signal from the High Magus from Lymuria. Would the signal ever appear? He had been shocked when the Magus chose him, but the Mage had seen the strong magic already bursting within him, waiting to be awakened and trained. Finally, Seguro was ready to begin the journey he dreamed of all his life, the journey of ultimate power.

Crazy Eyes

Chris Helton

My Crazy Jane sees things around her differently
And I think that's why I like her
She walks and talks differently from the crowd
Even the cigarettes she smokes taste different
So why don't others care for her as I do?

She slips through logic like a rabbit from a magic hat
Isn't she pretty? Isn't she beautiful in black?
She looks to me like the technicolor angels
Which she tells me she sees in her dreams
We play and scream in the summer rain
But everyone stares and tries to keep away

The first thing I knew about my Crazy Jane
Was her bright and flashing crazy eyes
She uses words like "Wow" a lot
And she makes the word into a unique thought
When she talks to me through cigarette smoke
I wish I could write with her voice
And describe the flashes behind her eyes

Oh, she has the most beautiful blonde hair
I like to touch it when she sleeps
Feeling the softness to my touch while it is
Framing her innocent pale relaxed face
I wish I could get inside of her
To see everything those crazy eyes describe

Crazy Jane loves me wholly-it is the
Only way she knows how to do anything-
And I think I love her also

Hold on to Your Dreams

Becky F.

"Hold on to your dreams,
don't ever let them go,
make them all come true!"
a soft voice whispers
in my ear
day after endless day.
In my heart I'll always know
what I'm sometimes afraid to believe.
But they often seem so out-of-reach,
those dreams,
so far beyond my grasp;
I listen to that voice anyway
because I know it's the truth.
And so I hold on with all I've got,
I know I musn't let go.
I am sure that someday
the dreams I have will come true,
for it can be no other way.
Hold on tightly to your dreams,
dreams are all you've got,
even people go away sometimes.
If you have faith that dreams are real,
soon they will embrace you;
just believe that they come true,
they'll all be yours eventually.

The Eggmen

Jason Beres

A billion lined up,
seated down a great wall,
engrossed in their affairs
and the white sale at the mall.
Humpty-Dumpty exemplified for us all;
get ready, America, for your greatest fall.

Eat yourselves like acid from the inside out;
could kill the rest with a button without a doubt.
So we'll all trip the light fantastic--
it'll be the rage
as the eggmen light it up from their monkey cage,
While Bonzo goes to D.C. and gets the front page:
Dump the monkeys in a barrel and watch the world disengage.

Existance

Jen Anderson

What is it that we're searching for?
We travel all over the world from desert to sea.
I try to hunt for the answers to my mind's ache.
I look for these answers in the stars late at night.
What is life?
We search for the concept.
We beg for our own.
Yet when and if we have our precious life,
We question every moment of it and wonder how
Long we'll have it.

Forever

Francine

Forever is when the
Clouds will no longer be like cotton in the sky.

It's when Einstein and Newton and all the
Great minds will be proven false.
Their papers blowing in the wind unnoticed.

It's when the human race will be no more,
Shriveled up beneath a world too weary to take care of itself.

It's incomprehensible, unbelievable, unmentionable

Forever will never be
Until I see the Golden Circles
Given by a kiss.

It's Written All Over Your Face

Francine

I try to read your face
over and over
your mouth
your eyes
the wrinkles in your forehead
Trying to find a clue of your feelings
and thoughts

I find nothing,
except what I don't want to know.

I Don't Like You

Jason Beres

I don't like you
You, girl in red
who can't figure out why
she doesn't know what she's looking for.
I don't like you, man
who can forgive himself
for being an elf
for the string puppeteers who control you so.
I don't like you, girl
betrayed of souls
who left so cold
and wants to forget...

I'm not Jesus
and I try to be.
I don't like you
because you don't like me.
And it's a vicious cycle
your lies so true --
Leave me alone
because
I don't like you.

Inga

Dana Elliott

Slowly coming down the escalator,
I see her standing by her make-over chair.
She smiles at me broadly.
She knows she has a customer.

In a deep, husky voice she says,
"Good afternoon.
What wonderful bone structure you have.
May I make you over?"
Of course I reply, "Yes!"

Her long soft fingers with three inch blood red nails,
Softly put a satin band around my forehead,
To keep my hair back.
She runs her nails through my hair from my forehead to my
neck.
Her face is striking and determined,
Yet she has a frighteningly pushy gleam in her eyes.

She says very emphatically,
As if to me but really to herself,
"Your skin is milky white.
I will use an ivory base.
And browns to match your hair. BROWNS!
Brown blush and brown lipstick. YES!
Your eyes are a very beautiful light blue.
Look at me darling! Maybe a burgundy or mauve eye shadow.
Yes and creamy copper too."

She puts the finishing touches on,
Eagerly awaiting my purchase.
All I wanted was the free make-over.

When she realizes this,
Her warm brown eyes and her smile turn hard,
Her long, soft fingers turn cold.
She nearly pushes me out of the chair.

As I walk away I hear her say to someone else,
"God I love your bone structure.
Can I make you over?"

The Train

Christopher Helton

the inexperienced traveler
with her eager face turned outward
towards the window

the colors of the sunset
dwindling swiftly in the departure of the train
wash across her face giving her skin
the colors of her red gold hair

her eyes absorb everything which
speed past her window on the train:
houses, cars, telephone poles,
and mostly green
the green of the new-grown trees and grass

all of this is absorbed
and reflected
by those pale blue eyes

SRV

Eric Kurutz

Abruptly to an end
Came the last note of your tune
Taken to rest, in Heaven
with Hendrix, Rhoades and Moon.

A master of the blues
You influenced my soul
and touched deeply my heart
with the stories you told.

A master of the six string
A mentor of my ways
In your memory I will continue
'til the finale of my days.

You played each and every concert
as though it were your last
One night upon a "Pride and Joy"
I touched the shadow you cast.

It filled me with the spirit
of the late-great Stevie Ray Vaughan.
Your music, unlike you, will never die,
but forever play on and on...

High School Love

Sheila Gemperle

I

"Hurry up or you'll be late!" That was Mom's favorite statement. She was using it again. This time it was to get me to school on time. I ran downstairs, still buttoning my blouse, kissed her as I rounded the corner into the kitchen, grabbed a pop tart and my books and ran out the door.

Tony was waiting for me by the telephone pole in front of school, like always, when I got there.

"Hi Kerri," he said, "this time you're only five minutes late. We should make it to class before the bell rings."

"Well that's a fine greeting, 'Hi, you're late.' Can't you say something like, 'Hi, my love. You look beautiful this morning'?"

"Hi, my love. You look beautiful this morning," he said dramatically. Then added, "but you're still late!" We laughed, and he kissed me lightly on the cheek. Then we walked to our first class holding hands.

Tony was the kind of guy every girl dreams about. He was, as the saying goes, tall, dark, and handsome. He had a gorgeous smile and soft, inquisitive eyes. He was about six feet tall with broad shoulders. I, on the other hand, am only about five foot three with blond hair pertly cut in a short bob.

We've been dating for about two months now. I never stop thinking about him. My friend, Laura, says I'm jumping into a serious relationship too quickly. She says I should just take it as it comes--casually.

"Kerri, I would appreciate it if you'd visit this planet, at least during my class." That was Mr. Phillips. I'd been dreaming about Tony again.

"Yes Mr. Phillips. Sorry. Uh...what was the question, sir?"

"I asked you to come up to the board and figure out this math problem for us."

"Oh, OK."

I squeaked by that with a little help from Laura on the sidelines. What would I do without her?

"Hey, you got plans for Friday?" Tony had been waiting outside my classroom for me.

"No, not yet. What's up?"

"Oh, I don't know. I was thinking me and you could catch a movie or something. Want to?"

"Sure. It sounds great!" We walked hand in hand to our next class. It was nice having someone around all the time. Someone you could talk to. Someone to make you feel important. That was Tony.

"Well, here's my class. I'll see you at lunch, OK?"

"Yeah. Hey, Kerri? Try not to be late this time 'cuz I really have stuff to do after lunch, OK?"

"Sure, no problem!" I replied as I entered my classroom.

I took my usual seat next to Laura. English and math were the only two classes we were in together. Right as class was starting, Laura slipped me a note. I very cautiously unfolded it and read it without Mrs. Turner catching me. The note asked me to meet her at lunch before I met Tony. I was sure he wouldn't mind waiting a little while for me, so I nodded my reply.

At lunch Laura just wanted to know if I needed a ride to my exams next week.

"I'm not sure. I have to talk it over with my Mom. Maybe Tony will take me to some of them. Who knows? Thanks for asking, though. So, are you doing anything this weekend? Maybe we can all go out Friday."

"Good idea! I'll call you later. See ya!" As Laura left, I headed toward the lunch room to find Tony.

"What took you so long? I've been waiting forever!" Tony snapped.

"I just stopped to talk to Laura, is that OK?!"

"I wish you'd tell me when you're going to be late! You always just assume that I won't mind. I even told you I had things to do. I'm sick of being taken for granted!"

"I'm sorry, I didn't think you'd mind. I was only ten minutes late."

"Kerri, it's not just today. You always do this. You never think for once that maybe I might have something else to do other than wait around for you. I'm tired of it. Well, I've gotta go. I'll call you later."

"Yeah. Bye." Kerri ate her lunch alone, in silence.

II

It was a typical summer day: hot, muggy, and nothing to do but sit around. I had plans to go out tonight--with the girls, but as for today, nothing. I couldn't call Tony. Not after that conversation at lunch last week. It was going to be him calling or no one. Not me.

The phone rang. It was Laura. "Yes it's still on for tonight," I reassured her.

"OK," she said. "How's it going? I mean with Tony and all? Did he call yet?"

"No."

"Oh. Do you think he meant it? I don't. I think he just wanted to bring you to reality, and it was his way of saying, 'Hey no one takes me for granted.'"

"Oh shut up Laura! I don't take him for granted. I like him a lot, and everyone knows it!" I could yell at her and only her like that because she has been my best friend for so long, and we've seen every side of each other. "Laura, it's been a week, and he still hasn't called," I cried. "Do you think I should call him? Hell, he probably forgot my name already!"

"It'll be OK Kerri," Laura comforted, "somehow it'll all work out. I promise."

"Yeah, OK. Well, I'll see you tonight." I hung up the phone listlessly. I feel so empty inside. I wish he'd call. I don't care if he calls to break up--I just need to know where he stands! Is there a chance for us or not?! I'm going to call and ask him. I have to or I'll burst! Oh, maybe I shouldn't. I miss him so much though...

"Umm. Hi, Tony?"

"Yeah, this is Tony."

"Tony. Hi. It's Kerri."

"Hi Kerri, how're you doing?"

"Oh, I'm OK. I miss you."

"Yeah, I miss you too." I thought my heart was going to leap out of my chest when he said that! I was so happy to hear those words! I relaxed a little and added, "I've been thinking about you a lot."

"I've been thinking about you, too. Kerri, I haven't called because I don't know how to say this. I think you're a wonderful person. You really are, but we just aren't right for each other."

"What are you saying?" I asked, as if I didn't know what he was going to say next.

"Kerri, I don't think we should go out anymore." There. He said it. Now what? Should I fight for him? Should I beg him to stay with me? In a distance I heard him saying, "Maybe I'll see you around sometime. I gotta go. Bye." After he said this I slowly set the phone down. I felt empty. Hurt. Stunned, yet I knew it was going to happen. I got up from my bed and walked over to the mirror. I didn't see my reflection. I was looking past that. Inside. All I saw was emptiness. Nothing there. I wanted to cry, to scream. I knew I was being irrational. I had known it was over since last week. I had promised myself that when he finally let me go I was going to accept it. I only hung on to Tony for the security of having a boyfriend. Who cares if we were close or not? It was the title that counted. No. That wasn't true. I knew it wasn't. I was just trying to console myself since Tony was no longer there to do it. No more Tony. I couldn't imagine it. Not hearing his voice each night before I went to sleep. Not walking to class with him or eating lunch with him. Well, I could take it. I was almost a junior in high school now. I could handle anything. I threw myself on my bed, put my face in my pillow and cried. A sad, muffled cry. That was my life. Sad, confused, muffled. People say these things happen so you can learn. Live and learn they say. Do I have to?

Righteous

Jen Anderson

To be optimistic in a society which is not pessimistic
To keep your head above it all
To watch others lose grip and fall
To see others blame people for their own hurt
What is the difference between us and dirt?
Or to the people who turn lies into love
What do they see in the stars above?
Beauty may be beast, cruel may be kind
Too many questions full of pain and sorrow
Oh, loving Jesus, I'm scared of tomorrow

Lightning

Elisa Lukas

Flashing, shining, streaks,
Bright against the sky
And the thunder speaks,
As the colors die.

First the darkness and the silence,
Then a mighty flash,
As the sky explodes in violence,
With the lightning crash.

Sign of power, sharp and bright
Racing across the sky
Hoping to escape the sunlight
When it too must die.

...Together

Becky F.

Put your tiny hand in mine
and I will show the way.
I promise to protect you
if you put in me all your faith.
Don't ever lose your hold on me
or we will both be lost
and I will never be again
with you as before.
Put your tiny hand in mine
and we will find the way
...together.

Rest your tender head
upon my shoulder big and strong.
I promise to be your shelter.
You need cry no more.
I need you to rely on me
to heal you when you hurt,
and come to me always
when you need love.
I won't hesitate giving it to you.
Lay all your fears on my shoulder
and we will be strong
...together.

Bring to me your quivering body
that I may keep you warm.
Let me gently caress you
and keep you close to me,
holding you through night and day,
a constant guardian over you.
Let your gentle heart

beat softly in unison with mine
forever as it well should.
We'll keep all harm from finding us
in one another's arms
...together.

Let love take its hold on us
and get us through the night
...together
and for the rest of our lives.

She's Gone

Jennifer Anderson

The door creaks open,
I stare into empty faces.
My nerves shut down as
tears begin to fall.
The time has come to run,
to escape this place of pain.
The coffin is being carried
away, along with the
memories
shared.

THE EXPEDITION

Maureen Gemperle

Anticipation builds inside me
As we coast down each highway.
We drive through city after city,
State after state, never stopping.
Our destination is bigger, more grand.

Sleeping, waking, sleeping again.
The monotonous pattern breaks every three hours
As our rotation system is put into action.
Now they rely on me to transport us
To our glorious destination until
My tiring three hour shift passes.
The pattern of sleeping and waking
Begins for me once again.

After thirty long, endless hours of bonding,
The first part of our journey comes to an end.
We prepare to embark on a
Much greater challenge.
The real journey has just begun....

We awake after a refreshing sleep,
Eager to get an early start.
Our camping and hiking equipment is carefully packed.
Maximizing space and weight is our goal.
Canteens full? Check!

With homemade walking sticks in hand,
And packs on our backs,
We begin, all giggly inside.
I gasp as I gaze at the Canyon in full bloom.
Awe and amazement swell within me.

I become like a love-struck schoolgirl,
Struggling fruitlessly to put her feelings into words.
Nothing surpasses the wonders of nature.

Slowly we make our way to the bottom,
Drinking in the delicious, plentiful sights
As if they were our life source.
Many "Kodak" moments arise
As we pause to capture the beauty.

Long hours pass,
Sweat drenches our tired bodies.
Just as a runner crosses the finish line,
We taste victory as we see the metal bridge
Symbolizing the end of our long distance trek.

We are greeted by mule deer
Resting in the shade of our campsite.
The rushing Bright Angel Creek
Provides a source of refreshment.
Explorations abound for the mischievous few,
While others begin cooking sparse meals.
We absorb information hungrily
Hoping this source of pleasure won't end.

We fall asleep under the wide eye of the full moon.
Awaking at dawn to sand in our eyes and
"Kathy" the "wild" turkey investigating our site.
Another day of adventure begins
As we eagerly feed on more splendors.

Each movement is painful and awkward
As our stiff muscles force us to
Do the "Kaibab shuffle," hobbling to and fro.
The more we walk, the better our muscles feel.
So, we forge ahead to discover more unknowns.

Our last day nudges us awake at dawn.
We must hike out of this blessed haven.
Rest and water become essentials.
We trudge on a never-ending upward grade.
Our legs are exhausted, threatening to quit.
Sweat pours down, getting soaked up by our bandanas.
Mule shit becomes harder to avoid,
As our tired legs scream for rest.

At long last, the top is reached.
Our spirits soar high,
And our bodies sink low into welcoming chairs and beds.
Showers, a lost luxury, have been found.
Success is ours, and it tastes sweeter than honey.

We hiked the Grand Canyon!!

Running on Mexican Time

Francine

The yellow sun sets over the horizon
As a turtle makes its way across the street.

Cheese ages.

A "chico" watches a bee gather pollen.

There is always time later.

Money

Elisa Lukas

Does it strike you as funny
What people will do for money?

Some may actually climb a mountain
suspended by a rope,
while others dance atop a fountain
or skid on a bar of soap.

Some may try to sing and dance
for their money and loot,
but others fall down stairs by chance,
and make their money through a pending law suit.

Still others inherit from the next of kin,
which is definitely not a sin,
despite the fact that poor Uncle Fred
has just passed into the ranks of the dead.

However, some people do work for their money,
I know it strikes you as funny,
but it's true
and quite frankly, it's the best option open to me and you.

Pointless

Maureen Gemperle

Define pointless.
Pointless is when you
Attend a class of which
You know the subject matter.
It is watching a mystery movie
When you know the ending
Or watching the conclusion of a series
Without seeing the beginning.
Pointless is when you
Fight and fight for
An umpire to take back
His call in a baseball game.
It is the effort you
Put into a relationship
Only to end it before it begins.
Pointless is trying to
Fight the system.
It is the struggle
Of the minority to
Become a majority
And the poor to become rich.

Pointless is a word which
Sadly describes many
Things which we do.

What Makes Sense Is Not Always Done

Jen Anderson

Am I the only one who feels in a society where violence is so real?

People lock the doors against the strange new life at night, yet not one of these people are open to the question, "what is right?" People, the innocent, are haunted by the night followers.

Only when the sun shines is this tragedy cured. I do not lock my doors or hide in a corner. I dare the wrong to take my divinely night power. I am not crazy. I know the odds of who will win the battle. But it is better to fight for what I feel than to turn and flee.

My Life

Jen Anderson

I wanted things to be simple. No worries or complications. I guess I should have asked for the end to famine, it would have happened sooner. I needed a world in which nothing broke. Yet, mine is one big mess. I look for the mystical answers, and get only two sided questions. I guess that's why I ended up here. Locked-up, shut-out, and alone. I don't regret my search, for now I at least found peace.

Not Forgotten

In memory of Judi Romans who passed from
this life on October 11, 1988.

Kara M. Costa

I remember her vibrant figure, so alive, portraying her lively attitude and her love of life. Her rosy cheeks, her lips of plums, and her silvery outlined eyes, all accented her young, attractive, bronzed facial features. Her mid-length, sassy, golden blonde hair also contributed to her beauty. She bore an endless smile.

Judi was my grade school track coach, but moreover, a friend. She possessed a great interest in dedicating her time and efforts into the lives of children. She especially affected my life. Her vociferous cries of encouragement gave me the self-confidence and strength to face my competitors fearlessly. Judi never allowed an outstanding performance to go unnoticed. These were the times when her remarks became outspoken and obnoxious.

"Hey, Claude!" Judi shouted. Claude was the coach of my grade school's biggest rival. In an upset, I beat their school's top runner. Dismayed, Claude glanced up from the unbelievable time on his stopwatch. He was speechless.

Putting her arm around me, Judi proceeded to brag, "Isn't she something? It didn't look like much of a contest to me, Claude. What happened to your girl?"

Slightly amused, but even more embarrassed, I wanted no part in the conversation. As I nonchalantly walked away, I heard an argument begin. Judi liked to provoke others. In fact, she liked to get into arguments. I can't remember a time when she lost one. But she fought for the right things, the things she truly believed in. It was just like her to wave our victory in Claude's face.

Judi was also a protector, like a tall, strong, mature tree whose foliage acted to shield, hide, and nurture its fruit from the damaging effects of nature. Her friendships were like thick, sturdy branches, as important to her as fruit is to a tree. Few branches ever broke, and Judi always made allowances for new ones to grow.

Suddenly, like lightning which strikes a tree near its inner core, damaging its flawless trunk and its vital roots, disease struck Judi. Having no cure, doctors performed numerous, extensive, and even physically draining treatments for the cancer, and Judi was soon diagnosed as being in remission. But then, abruptly, the cancer began to fester, grow, and eventually spread, killing Judi's protective foliage, weakening her strong branches, discoloring her tan truck, leaving her to suffer a painful, inevitable death.

Stubborn and proud, Judi was responsible for her rapid deterioration by allowing a common cold to develop into pneumonia. Her family realized her worsening condition, but Judi would not let them help her. Judi told me not to worry, but how could I not? I think she honestly thought that she would get better on her own, or she knew that it was her end. I felt betrayed. It was as if she allowed me, as a piece of fruit, to fall from her branch while I tried so hard to hold on. Hurt and angry, I feared that every time I saw her, it would be my last. Finally, Judi committed herself to a hospital bed. By then, it was too late.

It virtually killed me to see Judi lying helplessly in her hospital bed, tubes protruded from her nose and arms. An oxygen tank waited to help her catch her breath as the pneumonia progressively worsened. I could not bare to look at her changed appearance. Her poor body was completely swelled. Her face was drained of the vitality it continuously had portrayed. Her rosy cheeks, her lips of plum, and her silvery outlined eyes all had paled. Her voice was soft now, and laughing, one of her favorite things, made her cough until she cried in pain. A few strands of hair, a few breaths of life were all that remained of this young woman who was once so alive but was now deteriorating so quickly.

Despite her inevitable end, Judi was a fighter, not yet willing to succumb to the uncontrollable enemy destroying her body. She was not scared of what lay ahead. Her once glistening eyes were forgiving, not spiteful. She was a bit too understanding as to what was happening to her. Unlike Judi, I could not understand. Unanswered questions ran through my mind: Why was God taking such a good, dedicated person? How can He be called just and allowing when He allowed such a horrifying death?

Nevertheless, Judi held on as long as she could. Impelled by the little strength she still possessed, Judi managed to address a letter to her family and friends. The letter ensured all that she attained a peaceful end. She encouraged all to go on with their lives, dwelling on the past for no longer than a moment. With that, Judi slipped into a coma.

As the letter was read at the funeral mass, I wondered how someone could be so unselfish and generous. I wondered how things would change without her presence. It was then that I realized that although her physical presence was gone forever, her spiritual one would remain within the hearts and memories of the hundreds of people gathered to bid her body farewell. I felt safe with this realization, but nevertheless, the tears fell uncontrollably from my eyes. I knew that she would not be forgotten. Unlike a dead tree whose stump lies in an empty field, Judi will never be just a tombstone in a shady cemetery.

Open Fire

Jen Anderson

Love, like the heart of an open fire,
Burns inside my heart,
Melts inside my soul,
Never ending,
Always flowing,
From me to you.
Blazing steadily,
It touches your heart,
And you melt it with a single flame.
The thought of you heats me up.
A look at you burns me up.
I melt when you touch me.
This heat that flares inside
Thaws the hatred that once lived here
And turns it into passion so strong
It always will survive.
This glow will always be here
To warm you when you need it most,
And be there for you when I'm gone.
Burning inside my heart,
Melting within my soul,
My love will last longer than the finest of all gold.
I will always love you,
As long as my fire burns.

Peace With A Fly

Eric Kurutz

Flies are your friends
Believe me it's true
Just ask me "Why?"
When I land next to you

I don't cause much harm
I may answer this way
All that I do is fly 'round
night and day.

And if I may happen
to land right on you
Don't hasten to squash me,
Just kindly say "Shoo."

But still so many of you
always proceed
swatting at me
but seldom succeed.

I move with great swiftness
not slow like a snail.
Because you are slow
is why you constantly fail

So now I put it to you
I request a reply.
Why can't you live
at peace with a fly?

Air Attack

Tia Mauman

Achoo, achoo, sneeze, splat!
"Oh my god, what in the world was that?"
Something just happened behind me just now,
And something slimy just hit me that feels like the spit of a cow.
It came out of nowhere, unexpected, unplanned--
And it chose, out of 20, on MY neck to land.
The sender unknown is surely appalled and aghast
at what a projectile was sent from that blast!
So what do I do? Do I scream? Do I cry?
I never knew things so disgusting could fly.
I've got it! I'll stand up and declare, "THIS IS WAR!"
After all, isn't that what free speech is meant for?
To avail our injustices, to show it's a fact
that we won't be preyed upon by meaningless AIR ATTACK!!?
I wonder if there's ever been a more meaningful cause
Wars have definitely been started over less severe social faux
pas.

Spit

Dana L. Elliott

My Boyfriend
Deep from the Chest
Slimy and Wet
Out the Window
In the Trash
He turns to Me and Says
How about a Kiss

A Covenant With Healers: A New Psalm

Kara M. Costa

I praise the Lord wholeheartedly for the identity which He has helped me discover, for I have found solidarity among the healers of this earth.

Although we have been created in the image and likeness of the Lord, we are not perfect and human imperfection has allowed injustice to enter our world.

Many of the children of the Lord suffer from physical and spiritual ailments, and they have become victims of injustice.

But the Lord has not abandoned them, for He has called us, the healers, to live among them.

The Lord has called me through my love of communications, that I may too someday heal the speech impaired.

I have entered into a covenant with other healers in hopes of delivering the impaired from the discriminatory ways of the unjust.

For the impaired also have a right to prosperity, but injustice sometimes blinds us and allows selfishness to overtake us.

With the help of the Lord, I hope to remove these prejudices in order to give the speech impaired a chance to live up to their potential.

I hope to teach them to speak fluently, that they too may sing praises to the Lord aloud.

I hope to open their mouths so that they have a prosperous and meaningful life in the eyes of the unjust, and that I too may be prosperous in my service to the impaired.

I hope too that all healers and their patients gain the respect that is due to them.

Sing praises to the Lord, for He has laid the groundwork that has set me on the path of life with a vocation in service of my brothers who are less fortunate than I.

Thanks and adoration to the Lord for inspiring me to a life of service and healing.

I fall on my knees in thanksgiving, for the Lord has opened my mouth that I may realize the importance of such a gift.

I thank the Lord for allowing me to see the injustice that lingers in the hearts of many.

I am confident in my purpose, for it is the oppressed that I will set free.

My mouth has been opened and my tongue has been blessed with a gift from above that I may take the gift of speech for granted no more.

I feel safe, for the Lord has provided me with the resources that I will need to fulfill the covenant I have established.

I praise the Lord for He has bestowed these gifts upon me.

My vocation, however, has only just begun for the true assessment of my desire to heal must come from education and experience.

It is under my professors' direction and through a mastery of voice skills that I will conquer the art of communication.

Only then will I be able to fulfill the covenant I have entered.

Thus, intense training of my voice in projection, diction, and articulation will be the vital roots from which my skills will grow.

The Lord has also allowed me to see the rewards of working with individuals one on one, for that is another source which I would like to base my vocation of service.

The welfare of individuals is important to me, for we must all live together as social beings.

The future holds for me more schooling and intense training. But I can begin healing and working for justice in my life this day, even before my profession as a healer is established. I can also support charities who benefit the impaired until the

true assessment of my vocation allows me to enter the world as a professional, for then, I shall be one with these charities in goal and direction.

Through intern job experience, I may also gain knowledge of healing and justice, that will enable me to better serve the impaired.

I shall explore the field of communication more fully through the preparatory classes I endure.

For these classes will expect me to use the skills I have learned in my previous studies to achieve new heights in communication.

Through these new heights, I shall grow in my knowledge and assessment of my covenant.

I shall also observe other healers in their service and learn through their example.

I shall be the best healer that is capable of me, for I shall not fail in the vocation the Lord has chosen for me.

Listen to me, my fellow healers, for the Lord has set us on a mission in service of His people.

Pray to Him and ask Him to give us the courage and strength to uphold our covenant despite the persecutions of the unjust, for we too may be the victims of their jest.

Seek patience from the Lord, that we may never be discouraged in the fulfillment of our covenant.

Ask too for protection, that the Lord may never abandon us in our journey of the life He has called us to live.

Be confident in yourselves, my people, for we have been called by the Lord to serve His people.

Be steadfast and stouthearted and listen for His voice, for he shall continue to speak to us.

Heed His voice and be not afraid; instead, have faith in the Lord, for He will deliver us in our times of need.

Listen to me, the healers of the world, for we must stand as one against the persecutors of those we serve.

Sitting on the Pier at Whahalla Beach

Dana L. Elliot

The same intriguing factory lights ahead of me,
Mysteriously beautiful at night,
Yet depressing and gloomy during the day.
The distant Chicago skyline behind me.
To my right I see the carnival.
The last few people are leaving.
The lights are being turned off,
Slowly one by one.
I can smell the cotton candy,
Mixed with a fishy smell of the water,
And the sulfur of the factories.
To my left I see Jonathan,
And the endless black waters of Lake Michigan.
I know he's watching and studying me,
Wondering who I have become over the past four years.
I stare at the factory lights,
But I am afraid to look at him.
I hear the whispers and kisses of close by lovers.
I can't help but remember
The long forgotten embraces Jonathan and I shared.
The stale taste of beer and anxiety is in my mouth.
As he moves closer,
I smell the Polo he always wore.
The cool lake breeze makes me shiver,
Even though it's a hot summer night.
He grabs my hand and I know
It's not the breeze that made me shiver.
My stomach is doing somersaults.
My heart is beating so fast.
I let go of his hand.
Sadness overwhelms me.
I don't love Jonathan anymore.

"Why Not Me?"

Dana L. Elliott

I opened my eyes but only slightly. The sun was so bright that I thought I was going to be blinded. I rolled over and yelled to my mom that I was sick and that I wasn't going to school. But then I remembered that a few of us were going to I. U. N. for a college seminar with no supervision. I hopped out of bed and put on something dressy but summery. It was a scorcher for only being the beginning of April. It was April 3rd to be exact.

I got to school, went to homeroom, and then met Tracy and Karmen to drive over to the college. There were a lot of kids there, every one looking quite bored. After we had signed in and no one was watching, the three of us snuck out laughing and feeling so young. We hopped into the Whale, my '77 baby blue Ford Granada with gray primer spots all over it, and went on our own way.

Prom was 22 more days so the most sensible thing for us to do was to look for prom dresses, even though the three of us had already bought ours. I never felt more free from worries and problems. Graduation was a little more than two months away, and I had been accepted to every college I had applied to. Nothing could go wrong.

The rest of the day went as usual. I went home, had a snack, and started to do homework. It was such a warm day that I decided to get some sun while I worked on my school work. I came in around 5:30 when the sun started to go down. A few minutes later my family sat down to eat. After eating we all sat down to watch television. It was Friday night so I could stay up later than usual. At 7:00 all the good shows came on. The phone rang just as I was getting comfortable. I was sitting right in front of the door and loving the feel of the warm breezes seeping through the screen. It had been such a wonderful day. My dad interrupted my daydreaming to tell me that the phone

was for me. I hopped up hoping it was a boy but just as happy to hear Tracy's voice on the other end. I thought maybe I'll go out tonight after all.

Tracy asked me how I was and told me sit down. Something in her voice made me do what she said. I laughed and thought, "another practical joke." I remember every word she said, "God, I don't know how to tell you this so I guess the best way is to just say it. Lisa is dead. She hung herself." I asked her, "Lisa Who?" but I knew. I yelled at her and told her she was playing a mean trick and that she was lying, but I knew. I screamed "no" and felt my whole youth shatter into a thousand pieces. I dropped the phone and sat there shaking, not knowing what to do. Everyone was yelling at me and asking me what happened. Why wouldn't they just leave me the hell alone? I screamed that Lisa had hung herself. I ran into my bedroom, grabbed my car keys, and said I was going to Tracy's. My dad took the keys out of my shaking hands and told me he would drive me.

We were in the car and I kept shaking my head and saying no. I made my dad drive by her house. I didn't see any yellow tape. It was the wrong girl. It wasn't my friend. Then dad drove by the house slowly and I saw the yellow police tape all around the yard. The curtains were open and the house was all lit up. I quickly turned my head away. I didn't want to see anything. I'm not sure what I expected to see--maybe Lisa's lifeless body hanging from the ceiling.

My dad dropped me off at Tracy's and left. I went to Tracy and laid my head on her lap and we cried until there were no more tears. I called my friend Larry but he wasn't home. His mother said that my parents had already called and that she would find him and send him to my house immediately. I called my dad and he picked me up. I felt stiff and lifeless. Larry was there waiting for me. He took me out to help get my mind off of anything and everything. I needed to do something, run, scream, anything but all I wanted to know was why her, why not me?

That weekend I heard stories of all kinds but none were the truth because the truth was too horrid to even imagine

happening. While I was trying on prom dresses and feeling so young my good friend was being beaten and strangled to death by the brother of her boyfriend. Greg too was a friend, and he wept with all of us that Monday at school when we all walked around like zombies. But Greg had Lisa's nail marks on his neck underneath that turtle neck he wore. Those scratches that were the last fight in her. All I kept asking myself was why her and why not me?

They arrested Greg that Thursday the first night of Lisa's wake. While one of my friends was lying dead in a coffin another was being fingerprinted, and put in a jail cell at the same time. I remember walking up to see her and holding my friend Chris's hand and squeezing it so tightly that I left my nail marks on the palm of his left hand.

This was supposed to be the best times of our lives. We were seniors in high school for Christ's sake. We were ready to conquer the world. It was a time of banquets, awards, and passing out senior pictures signing "Keep in touch" on the back. Lisa never got a chance to sign her pictures. I got hers from a little wooden box next to a memorial card telling me I would see Lisa again someday. I didn't understand how my carefree and fun youth had turned into me asking myself every day "Why her, God, and why not me?"

Die Yet

Eric Kurutz

ONLY
FOUR GREASY
DONUTS TO START
OFF MY DAY. I USED TO EAT
EIGHT UNTIL I SAW
WHAT I
WEIGH

A
DOUBLE
BURGER FOR
LUNCH--Mmm Mmm I JUST
CAN'T WAIT. FOR IT'S NEARLY
TWO HOURS SINCE
WHEN LAST
I ATE

AND
FOR DINNER
IT'S CHICKEN DEEP-FRIED
GOLDEN BROWN THAT SITS IN MY
STOMACH ANCHORING ME
TO THE
GROUND

DID
I MENTION
DESSERT? FOR LUNCH
WHAT I GOT WAS A SMALL HOT FUDGE
SUNDAE IN A BIG
OL' CROCK
POT

MY
DINNER I
ENDED WITH A SMALL
PIECE OF CAKE. ADHERING TO MY
DIET TO TRY
AND LOSE
WEIGHT

AT
NIGHT I
DELIGHT IN PASSION
SORBET, A LOW CALORIE
TREAT TO TOP
OFF MY
DAY

BUT
WHO AM I
FOOLING WITH THE
THINGS THAT I EAT? I'VE YET
TO LOSE WEIGHT AND
CAN'T SEE MY
FEET

AN EMPTY JAR

Kara M. Costa

A glass jar -
Concealing my pain
With a secure, air tight lid,
Which allowed no leakage -
Was placed on a shelf,
Behind a book of love poems you inscribed to me,
Romeo and Juliet, my favorite play about "star-crossed
lovers,"
And a cracked frame bearing no picture.
Days, weeks, months pass,
But the jar remained unopened,
Shuffled from one place to another, abruptly.
Back and forth it slid,
Finding no comfortable position.
Then, the accident - the jar slipped,
Or perhaps, was pushed
Off the shelf, hitting the floor and
Shattering into pieces
Exposing its contents once again.
Finally, freely the "potent chemical "
Vaporized into the atmosphere of my room.
But the chemical went unnoticed -
It did not singe my skin or contaminate my air
For I am finally over you.

Mousetrapped

Jon Nichols

Rain fell on the Midwestern campus. It flowed freely and without hindrance....just like Sarah Maason's blood. Red, flashing lights from police cars painted the side of the girls' dormitory and caused the towers of the church to glow ghostly in the night.

The residents within were being informed of the tragic loss of their fellow student and friend. They exploded into a nova of tears as they heard the details of the extraction of Sarah's body from the railroad tracks south of campus. They could all picture her corpse being zipped into a plastic bag and loaded onto an ambulance as the cops taped up the yellow "POLICE LINE--DO NOT CROSS" signs. It was Thursday. For some, there would be no partying during the weekend. For others, drinking would be that much easier.

But it seemed a typical Thursday night in Rhodes Hall. The constant background chatter of the place was always difficult to get used to for most freshman...even if your father taught at the college.

Jim Nixx's father did. Jim still had all the problems of adjustment to life away from home, but things came into their own. Sure, he got the usual flak over "why don't you go home to eat?" or "why don't you do your laundry at home?" and just basically, "why the hell don't you live at home?!?" He had thought about it, but independence compared to comfort seemed more valuable. He paused to think of that as he walked the hall towards the microwave. He found it in use.

"What ya makin' Bub?" Jim asked.

"Soup," the man known only by the nickname of Bubbles replied. Bubbles was one of the friendliest men Jim had ever met. In fact, with his hairstyle, waistline, and a few

acutriments, Bubbles could easily pass for Santa Claus. At Jim's entrance, Bubbles was putting his trademark, fifty-six crackers, into his potato soup.

"You see, essentially what I have is flavored crackers," Bubbles explained as he moved away from the small counter. "You know, I could probably market this."

"Where have you been all night?" Nixx asked as he tossed his packet of popcorn into the 'wave.

"Studying. I've got this poli-sci test tomorrow that's going to be a bear. I'm probably going to get a D in the class thanks to Maason."

"C'mon Bub. You can't keep carryin' a grudge." Jim punched a few random buttons on the 'wave.

"She deliberately gave me the wrong answers for that test! She hated me! I'd think if anyone would be mad at her, it would be you!" Bub said.

The words jarred unpleasant memories in Jim. The constant "RAPPA-TAP-TAP" of the corn popping only punctuated them like a machine gun. It had only been a few weeks ago that Sarah had released a deadly computer virus into Nixx's home directory of the college network. It wormed its way around and totally lunched his programming project...subjecting Nixx to the first D of his college career.

"I've learned to live with it." Jim said bitterly as he jerked the microwave door open to retrieve the popcorn bag. He just had to keep reminding himself of how Sarah was in campus ministry and always kept the tablecloth on the altar very clean.

A chorus of profanity and curses came from the hallway. Jim and Bubbles didn't even have to enter the hallway to know who it was. It was the stressed-out voice of "Rip" O'Riely. "GOD! Turn that Metallica crap off!"

Rip was right. The person with the Metallica was being rather loud. Rip was noticeably stressed as he shook the rain from his overcoat. Bubbles roomed with Rip so Jim decided to follow them to their room.

"So what exactly is it now, Rip?" Bub asked between a mouthfull of soup. He spilled a little on his bumble-bee shirt and uttered a mild curse.

"Aw, I've just been in my stupid office all freakin' night!!! No one else ever does their job and I end up doing everything!!!" Rip explained as he threw discarded clothes about the room. Some landed atop various road signs that hung upon the wall.

The door opened and instantly Metallica began to assault the three men's ears. In the doorway stood the figure of Ron Odum, a tall and rather dark figure from Canada.

"Hey 'der," he greeted in a Canadian accent. "Anybody know where the new pizza place in town is located? I'm hungry."

"Why don't you have it delivered?" Jim asked over a chorus of "Blackened."

"That's right. I'd better cancel my cab." Odum left and headed for the hall phone. Bubbles exited towards the room across the hall as shouts erupted over the Metallica. Rip and Jim decided to investigate as well.

Flying black hair and a squeal of "Leggo! It's mine you dork!" was what greeted Bub. The long hair belonged to Jayce, the resident metalhead. The squeal came from Kevin Kibber, yet another student. The two were engaged in a fierce tug-o-war over a misshapen, stained, and slightly torn piece of literature. Bub and company precariously moved forward.

"It's my nudey book!" Kibber grunted through clenched teeth, as he tugged at the girly mag with all his strength.

"Get lost jerk!" Jayce said. "If you want this back, you gotta give me my Twinkie the Kid sunglasses!!!" With that, he broke the magazine free of Kibber's hold and held it to his chest in a bear hug. Kibber leapt on Jayce and wrapped his legs around his neck. He started to pound on his head and then proceeded to bite his arm. Everyone in the room knew they were just playing with each other, but if Kibber were to damage one of Jayce's Metallica posters...the result would be assured: it would mean the destruction of Kibber.

"Look guys," Rip grunted as he moved into the fray. "I think I can settle this real quick." Rip managed to remove the piece of pornography from the stranglehold and turned towards the door. Before leaving, he examined the "literature."

"Bumpin' Broads?" Rip questioned the title but admired its content. Jim and Bubbles peered over Rip's shoulders in curiosity.

"What the hell, Rip?" Kibber exclaimed. "It's my nudey book!! Gimme!" Kibber then started to playfully wrestle with Rip and the whole stupid thing started again.

"Hey! Stop it!" Bubbles called out while grabbing Jim by the shoulders. "You know who this guy's dad is? He's John Nixx, vice-president for academic affairs for the college."

Yes, it was a typical night in the guys' dorm. There was just the right amount of activity to keep anyone from noticing the stranger who had just entered from the rain. His raincoat was soaked and his face looked to be without sleep or rest. He knocked on the door of Greg Leemo, first floor RA.

The door swung open and a funky jazz bass flowed from Greg's stereo speakers. Greg himself appeared in the doorway with his blonde hair and GQ wardrobe.

"You're Greg Leemo?" the stranger asked as rain rolled from his coat. Greg nodded a hesitant affirmative. The stranger reached into his pocket and extracted his wallet. This particular wallet had a badge.

"I'm Detective Trotter, City Police, homicide division. May I come in?"

"Uh, yes." Leemo felt the instinctive guilt and paranoia that most people feel around cops. "P-please sit down," he said while motioning to the white couch in his room. Leemo's senses were reeling. What did he do? Was it what he did when he was 16? My God, it couldn't be!

"I'm afraid I don't have time for pleasantries." Trotter stated plainly as he checked to make sure no one was in the hallway. "I don't quite know how to break this serious matter to you, but...the department believes there's a murderer on this campus, possibly in this dormitory."

A slow wave of fear washed over Greg. He found himself getting faint. He plopped onto the couch, realizing that his management homework was not as important as he once thought.

"H-how do you know this??"

"Were you acquainted with a student here named Sarah Maason?" the Detective asked.

"Uh, yeah. She cleaned the towels and tablecloths for the church." Greg explained as Trotter's choice of the word "were" hit him.

"We found her dead out by the railroad tracks. She was...murdered."

Greg's mouth gaped like that of a fish that could no longer breathe. "Who? How?"

"She was stabbed through the neck. Not much blood. Most of it collects in the trachea and they suffocate. No scream either." It horrified Leemo at how Trotter could speak of that like he was giving a class lecture. "The coroner's estimate that she was dead only an hour before a motorist came upon the body. Her body's being taken to forensics for further study. The only lead we have to a suspect is what a witness saw about an hour ago. A girl from Sarah's dormitory said she saw a man running through the central court towards this dorm."

"Well heck, that's not much." Leemo said.

"No, but it's all we have. Look, you're going to have tell everyone here what's going on. Campus security is right outside and we're going to quarantine the dorm. I'm going to inform the upstairs RA now, a Mr. Randy isn't it?"

"Uh, yeah. Yeah. I'll take care of things here." Greg said, still not sure what was happening.

"Good. I'll be back in about an hour. Some of my men are going to be here in the building all night, so....."

Leemo nodded and turned to inform the dorm as Trotter entered the tempest. Neither of those two had noticed a freshmen named Gavion that had been using the washing machines across from Leemo's room.

Short and stocky Gavion ran to Rip's room where the rest of the clan seemed to be congregated. Each bound of his steps seemed to shoot him further than normal. His pulse was much quicker and so was his heart rate. She was dead. Someone had killed her. Someone in this dorm. They could kill again.

"How's the keg collection, Bubs?" Rip asked in a business-like manner as he pulled his Polo shirt on. Bub pulled a shoebox

from beneath one of the cushions on their couch. He opened it and quickly counted the money.

"We're still quite a ways off. I say we hit the freshmen up for about ten bucks each." Bubbles submitted.

"Yeah, we need to get this weekend going. Man, oh man, do I need to blow off some steam!" Rip slapped more Drakkar on.

Gavion bounced into the room, out of breath. His eyes had the terror of Satan in them and his voice was coated in fear.

"Guys, I just heard that someone killed Sarah Maason."

The reply was the usual staccato "What?" "No way!" and "Ain't that somethin'?" Shock slowly began to build up within each of the six men. Rip's mouth dropped about two feet. Bub let the precious shoebox fall carelessly to the ground. Odrum began to shake uncontrollably and Jim's eyes turned into saucers.

"Oh my God! Holy spit!" Jim kept repeating.

"Shut up Nixx! I'm tryin' to listen." Rip ordered. The other five became increasingly uneasy. "Now tell us everything Gavion."

"I was doing my laundry when I saw this guy walk into Greg's room. I heard him say he was a cop and he started talking about how they found Sarah dead out by the railroad tracks. God I can't believe it!! She always did such a good job of cleaning the towels for mass. But someone says they saw the murderer run into this dorm!"

There was silence then. Gavion's last piece of information was taken and processed by everyone's brain. Each one came up with the same conclusion: now they were all in danger.

"We're all gonna die!!" Jayce finally cried out as Leemo came upon them with a police officer.

"Damn does stuff get around fast!" Leemo thought to himself.

"Leemo! What the hell's goin' on?" Rip said as he flagged them down. Leemo entered the room as the officer closed the door behind them.

"Well as you guys know, Sarah was found dead tonight. It looks like someone has killed her. Now, the police seem to think that whoever killed her is in this dorm."

"Now just everybody keep calm," the cop ordered as the tension and questions began to spill forth from the room. "There are two policemen in this place including myself, and campus security is watching outside." Groans followed the statement as well as comments of "Oh great!" and "Jinkies, now we're safe!!".

"Hey!" Bubbles yelled at the cop and grabbed Jim by the shoulders. "Do you know who this guy's dad is?"

"Just keep cool, boys," the cop said as he exited with Leemo.

The room was silent for a good while. Jayce sat on the edge of the couch and stared out the window. A flash of lightning and the hammer of thunder shook the building. Odrum was visibly upset as a tear rolled from his left eye. Jim merely joined Jayce by the window.

The rain just kept coming. Nature went on its way, ignoring the tragedies of mortals. The rain probably ignored Sarah. It fell carelessly on her lifeless, still body. But who was he kidding? He secretly felt satisfaction at her death and he knew he wasn't the only one.

But now, he too was in danger of dying at the hands of a murderer. He didn't ask for this. There was no reason for him to die. Jim fought the urge to cry as the terror engulfed him like some giant, loathsome bat. The fear...it was like champagne bubbles bursting in his mouth. His mind hurled him back to a sunny day when he was seven. He was safe, on the patio of his house. His Star Wars figures sat in the dirt ahead of him, acting out an exciting adventure. The smell of his mother's baking cookies drifted out of the window and into his nostrils. He looked up and saw his mother at the window, wearing the brown-green sweater that he had come to know as a sign of safety and comfort. He was safe.

The sound of Gavion stammering shattered this picture like cheap glass. Jim was nineteen again and facing death. Better just accept it.

"Aw God." Gavion muttered softly. "D'ya...d'ya think he's going to kill one of us?"

"Who knows." Kibber rubbed his hand over his face. "God, this is so freakin' nuts! She was so good at keeping the tablecloths clean!!" Rip moved over to Kibber and placed an arm on him. They moved over to the bar.

"Look Kibber, I'm sorry. I mean, I know you two used to be close and everything." Rip tried to console him. Jim began to remember how Kibber and Sarah had dated for the first two weeks of school. She dumped him for no reason after that. God, was Kibber a mess back then.

"D'ya think they think it was one of us?" Gavion asked. No one answered. "What are they doing with her now?"

"Forensic tests." Jim explained. "They go over every inch of the body for any kind of evidence of who the killer might be."

"I don't understand. D'ya think she was in much pain?"

"Gavion! We don't want to hear about it! I know you may not have liked her too much, but she was still a person!!!" Ron began to let his tears and his rage fly. Some say that kind of thing is healthy. Well, it isn't for those around you.

"Well I'm scared Ron!! The murderer could be in this room!!!" At Gavion's startling revelation, the door flew open. Father Benjamin, the dorm's resident adult, stood before them.

"I was in the church when I heard what happened. Randy filled me in on the details. Y'all all right?" he asked.

"We're okay, Father. Just a little freaked out is all." Rip explained.

"Well, I'll be in my room if any of you need me," he sighed and watched a policeman stride down the hallway. "Lord in heaven, I havn't seen anything like this since Vietnam. Whoever murdered that girl must have the devil in him!" As Benjamin turned for his room, Gavion's eyes turned toward Jayce.

"The devil. Yeah. I'll buy that." Gavion said. Jayce sensed that he was being stared at and tore himself from the storm. He knew he was being accused of murder.

"What do you mean, Gavion?"

"You know Jayce...the devil. That guy you keep singing about. The guy all your music is written about. You even have

Satanic art hanging in your room." Gavion walked into Jayce's face.

"So what? You freakin' sayin' that I murdered her??"

"Isn't human sacrifice part of Satan worship?" said Gavion.

Jayce cocked his fist back and embedded it in Gavion's chin. Gavion fell back into the hallway as Jayce shoved everyone aside and leapt out to finish him off. He had Gavion by the shirt collar.

"You tell me Gavion!! Who has the collection of freakin' military knives in their room??? Who has an entire arsenal that is only for freakin' killing people??? How do we know you didn't do it, you bastard???" Jayce truly was angry enough to kill now.

Rip ran over and forcibly came between them. Jayce had displayed his psychotic side, but not without exposing Gavion's possible involvement in the murder.

"Both of you gotta stop!" Rip slammed Gavion against the green wall of the hallway. "We can't just sit around here all night and blame each other! Now everyone just sit down and relax!"

"I-I'm sorry! I mean, I'm with you guys, but...I just don't know what's going on anymore!!" Gavion slumped to the floor, exhausted. Jayce had stormed back to his room and popped in a Testament CD. Gavion kicked the hall garbage can over in frustration. Almost every form of refuse went spilling as Odin's hammer struck the building again with a flash of light.

"Hey Gavion, that's not called for! You trash the dorm and we gotta pay for it!! If I see that kind of business again, I'm takin' it out of your hide!! Understand me??" Rip said, forcing Gavion back up against the wall. It was going to get violent.

"We don't need your macho bull, Rip!" Odum said, finally coming out of isolation. "The way you're acting, we'll ALL be dead by morning! Just try to help think of a way out of this 'cause let's face it, none of us here did it! C'mon guys! We're friends. We used to trust each other!"

"I wonder if that's true, Ron." Jim started as he walked towards Rip in the hall. "Where were you tonight, Rip?"

"I told you! I was in my senate office!" Rip replied angrily, realizing that he was being accused.

"How do we know that? Was anyone with you? Besides, everyone knows how you paid her off to keep one of your political scams quiet. You weren't very happy when she double-crossed you and went public." Jim questioned. He let that sink in with everyone else. No one could be trusted.....no one.

"I don't have to put up with this!! If anyone killed Sarah Maason it was you, Nixx!! After she trashed your computer system, you were angry enough to kill. In fact, you said you would kill her given the chance. Did you get your freakin' chance tonight?"

"I was mad enough. I was...." Nixx muttered softly.

"Hey wait!" Bubbles entered the argument and put his arm around Jim. "Do you know who this guy's dad is?"

"Ease up Rip. Jeez." Kibber muttered.

"You were just as mad as Nixx, Kibber!! When she dumped you, you were in a freakin' rage! Maybe you did it?" accused Rip.

"Oh yeah! Sure! That's it!! Yep, Kibber's the one!" Jim ran about in a sarcastic manner. "Gee, you got it all figured out! Glad you're in control Rip! You don't seem to realize that your roommate here had as much reason as the rest of us!!" All eyes focused on Bub. It was like a two-by-four had hit Bubbles. He shoved Rip in the shoulder area and screamed in fury.

"Screw you all!!" Bub turned and ran down the hallway.

Rip's face was like that of a father who's child had pushed him too far. He set his gaze on Jim. It was then that Jim realized that everyone was under suspicion. Everyone had just as much reason to murder Sarah Maason as the other did.

"Let's go outside Nixx." Rip said without lifting his gaze.

"Sure," Kibber said as he looked out at the rain.

"mudbogging is always fun. Let me get my Hot Wheels set."

"C'mon. Let's go outside Nixx." Rip repeated. Jim knew exactly what he meant. "C'mon. You're dad ain't here to save you."

"He doesn't have to." Jim stared Rip down and walked toward the door. The hairs on the back of his neck began to

stand erect. Nixx began to drown in an undertow of anger and fear. "You want to go talk to Sarah Maason? Fine. I've nothing better to do tonight."

Bub was shocked at the behavior of his friends. He thought he could trust them. It appeared that he was wrong. He went to the only other man he thought he could trust: Fr. Benjamin.

He knocked on the priest's open door and cautiously poked his head inside. Benjamin jumped up from the floor with a start. He was near his desk. An open suitcase that was partially filled was perched near the couch. Fr. Benjamin quickly produced a smile.

"Hi Bub! Come on in!"

"I hope I'm not interrupting anything, Father." Bubbles moved silently in and closed the door. "Things are pretty crazy out there. Everyone's blaming everyone else for the murder. It's terrible!"

"Oh yes," Benjamin said as he folded some socks and threw them into the case. "She was a good girl. We'll miss her."

"Yeah." Bub stopped to study the suitcase that Fr. Benjamin was filling without much regard to him. "Leaving for the weekend?"

"Oh, uh," Father stopped and noticed what he was doing, "yeah, I guess so."

Suddenly, Bubbles' mind pieced things together. He was in grave danger! After all, no one in the dorm could be trusted, and here Father was packing a bag! But....it couldn't be Fr. Benjamin.....could it? He did say he was in the church. How do we know that? Jim had brought up the same point about Rip. And who would go to the church just to tell Father Benjamin? Bub's mouth dropped.

The priest saw this and panicked. He reached into his desk drawer and drew a 9mm military pistol. Bub recognized the silencer on the end. He put his hands up instinctively.

"You know who Jim Nixx's dad is?" Bub said desperately.

"I had to kill Sarah Maason because she made a mistake." Father Benjamin explained while keeping the gun pointed at Bub. "I couldn't stand the way she ironed the towels in the

church! They were never right! Little things like that begin to bother me. Y'know? Y'know?"

"I mean, I still take shots, but I keep missing the damn target!!! All my life it's been that way. Do you know what that's like??? Do you have any idea?" Tears began to flow from his face. "My family left me. The lawyers took them while VC bullets took my best friends in Saigon. Some of it I can't remember...some of it I can't forget. I guess...if someone has to have a past, it should be multiple choice! The war.....it took it all. I'm so tired. I'm so cold." The priest fell to the couch.

He needed help. Bubble's heart went out to him. He thought that love alone could help ease the man's pain. He and the rest of the dorm would see to that. They would help pay for his treatment. Eventually, maybe they could get him to teach here again. But that seemed unlikely. Bub went to go prop him up.

The last thing Bubbles ever saw was the flash of a muzzle.